

called nobles were middle-class men enriched, decorated, and possessed of land."¹ The middle class in western Europe has been formed out of the labor class within seven hundred years. The whole middle class, therefore, represents the successful rise of the serfs, but, since a labor class still remains, it is asserted that there has been no change. On the other hand, there has been a movement of nobles and middle-class grandees downward into the labor class and the proletariat. It was said, a few years ago, that a Plantagenet was a butcher in a suburb of London. It is also asserted that representatives of great mediæval families are now to be found as small farmers, farm laborers, or tramps in modern England.²

165. Mores conform to changes in life conditions; great principles ; their value and fate. For our purpose it suffices here to notice how the mores have followed the changes in life conditions, how they have reacted on the current faiths and philosophies, and how they have produced ethical notions to justify the mores themselves. They have produced notions of natural rights and of political philosophy to support the new institutions.

There are thousands in the United States who believe that every adult male has a natural right to vote, and that the vote makes the citizen. The doctrine of natural rights has received some judicial recognition, and it has been more or less accepted and applied in the constitutions of various states which were established in the nineteenth century. The American doctrines of 1776 and the French doctrines of 1789 are carried on and used in stump oratory until they get in the way of some new popular purpose, but what produced both was the fact that some new

classes had won wealth and economic power and they wanted political recognition. To get it they had to invent some new " great principles " to justify their revolt against tradition. That is the way in which all " great principles " are produced. They are always made for an exigency. Their usefulness passes with the occasion. The mores are forever adjusting efforts to circumstances. Sooner or later they need new great principles. Then

¹ D'Avenel, 144.

² Hardy used this fact in *Tess of the D'UrbermIUs*.